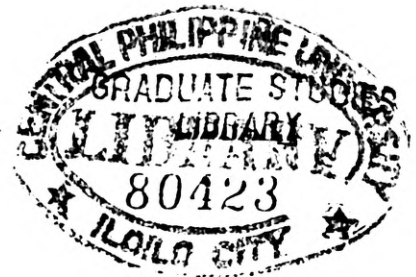


THE INFLUENCE OF MOTHERS' ABSENCE FROM OR PRESENCE AT HOME  
ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ELEMENTARY PUPILS OF  
CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
SCHOOL YEAR 1991-1992

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A THESIS

Presented to  
the Faculty of the School of Graduate Studies  
CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY



In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION

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by

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December 1993

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the relationship between the absence/presence of mothers and pupils' academic performance of pupils at CPU Elementary School during the school year 1991-92. More specifically this study aimed to determine the relationship between mothers' absence/presence and their children's academic performance controlling for mothers' educational attainment, mothers' occupation, socio-economic status, amount of time spent by the pupils in studying, availability of someone to assist the pupil in his school assignments, type of person who assists pupil in his school assignments and problems which pupils usually discuss with their mothers. This study also aimed to determine the relationship between academic performance of pupils whose mothers are abroad and their mothers' length of stay abroad, and the relationship between academic performance of pupils whose mothers are abroad

and the length of interval between mothers' home visits.

This study was conducted at CPU Elementary School with the Grade II to VI pupils as its study population. Ninety-six pupils whose mothers had been abroad for no less than six months constituted Group I of the study sample, while another group of pupils with "at home" mothers, having the same sex, grade and I.Q. as those in Group I, was taken as Group II. The Questionnaire on Academic Assistance to Pupils was conducted on pupil sample, while another questionnaire which was on socio-economic status, was sent to parents or guardians to answer. The academic performance, which refers to average of the averages of the pupils' grades in English and Mathematics of the first three grading periods, was taken from the progress report to parents.

Results reveal that majority of the pupils in both groups, belong to families with "High" SES and with two to three children. Eighty percent of pupils reside within the city of Iloilo. Most of their parents attained college education. The majority of the mothers abroad are employed in the professional/technical and related fields, while majority of mothers at home are housewives.

Both groups of pupils spent about the same amount of time per week in studying. Most of them get help in their school assignments. In most cases, fathers, uncles or aunts gave assistance in school work to pupils with "abroad" mothers, while majority of "at home" mothers gave assistance to their own

children. More than fifty percent of pupils in both groups indicated having problems, and majority of them reported having difficulties with school work, and problems regarding relationship with parents and siblings.

The majority of "abroad" mothers had worked abroad from two to five years, and most of them come home every two or three years. The average number of years of mothers abroad is 4.18 years, while the average interval of mothers home visits is 2.32 years.

#### Findings of Analyses of Association:

The mean academic performance of pupils with mothers at home (84.48) is significantly higher than that of pupils with mothers abroad (81.75). When the association between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance was tested, using the Eta, the obtained value (0.23794) showed a weak positive relationship between the two focal variables. Although weak, this relationship considered in the light of the fact that the average academic performance of pupils with "at home" mothers is significantly higher than that of pupils with "abroad" mothers, means that the absence/presence of mothers influences the academic performance of pupils.

When mothers' educational attainment was controlled, the relationship between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance becomes greater only when mothers are college-educated.

Taken as a whole, mothers' occupation strengthened the relationship between absence/presence of mothers and pupils' academic performance. This association is more pronounced for the group whose mothers are employed in the administrative/executive/managerial category, and of those in the sales category.

In general, SES strengthened the relationship between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance. Moreover, a substantial association between the two focal variables was shown for those in the "high" SES category. A relatively weak association between the two focal variables was detected in the "Average" and "Low" SES categories.

The Eta for the group which studied between three and six hours per week showed a strong association between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance. For the group which spent less than three hours, or seven hours or more for study, a minimal association between the two original variables was reflected. In general, the time spent for study weakened the relationship between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance.

The relationship between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance was increased when pupils have available help in school assignments. When the type of person who assists pupils in their school assignments was controlled, it was found that for pupils with fathers' assistance a strong association between the two focal variables emerged. In the case of

grandparents, uncle/aunt, and elder siblings a weaker association resulted between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance. In general, the relationship between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance prevails regardless of the type of person who assists in school assignments.

When the presence of problems was controlled, the relationship between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance was strengthened. It means that the absence/presence of mothers influences the academic performance when pupils have problems. This relationship was even more pronounced when pupils have financial problems and problems in relationship with teacher, and relationship with siblings. In the light of the fact that the average academic performance of pupils whose mothers are abroad is lower than that of pupils with "at home" mothers in almost all categories shows that the mothers' absence influences the academic performance of pupils particularly when problems are present.

When the relationship between the academic performance of pupils with "abroad" mothers and mothers' length of stay abroad was tested with the use of Pearson  $r$ , it was found out that the relationship is significant at .05 level. The findings imply that the longer the mothers stay abroad the better the pupils' academic performance, while the shorter the mothers' length of stay abroad the poorer the pupil' academic performance.

When the relationship between the academic performance of pupils with abroad mothers and the length of interval of mothers'

home visits was tested with the use of Pearson  $r$ , it was found out that the relationship was negative and significant. The findings imply that the shorter the length of interval of mothers' home visits the poorer the academic performance.

### Conclusions:

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were arrived at;

First, a weak positive relationship exists between the absence/presence of mothers and academic performance. This relationship, considered in the light of the fact that the average academic performance of pupils with mothers at home is significantly higher than that of pupils with "abroad" mothers, means that the absence/presence of mothers influences the pupils' academic performance.

Second, in general, this influence on pupils' academic performance prevails regardless of the mothers' educational attainment. This influence is even strengthened among the college-educated mothers.

Third, this influence becomes more pronounced when the mother works in the administrative/executive/managerial, or sales categories.

Fourth, when socio-economic status was controlled the relationship between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance was even strengthened in the "High" category. The lower academic performance of pupils in the "abroad" group whose

mothers are in the administrative/executive/managerial or sales category can be explained by the fact that although pupils with higher SES have all the available facilities at home for study, they did not exert effort in their studies because of lack of mothers' guidance and motivation.

Fifth, taken as a whole, the influence of absence/presence of mothers on pupils' academic performance is only slightly affected by the time spent for study. A study period of three and six hours seems to show a strong influence on academic performance.

Sixth, the availability of someone to help in school assignments strengthens the relationship between absence/presence of mothers and academic performance.

Seventh, although on the whole, the type of person who assists in school assignments weakened the relationship between the two original variables, this relationship becomes substantial if father gives the assistance.

Eighth, the influence of absence/presence of mothers on academic performance is stronger among pupils who have problems. This influence is more pronounced when pupils have financial problems, problems in relationship with teachers, and relationship with siblings.

Ninth, the longer the mother has been away from home the better the academic performance; while the shorter the time the mother has been away from home the poorer the pupil's academic performance. In the light of other findings this does not



suggest that the children fare better-- when their mothers are away, but that when the children have had time to adjust to the mothers' absence the adverse effect of mothers' absence decreases.

Tenth, the length of interval between mothers' home visits has a significant influence on the academic performance of pupils; the shorter the interval between mothers' home visits the poorer the pupils' academic performance. If mother's interval between home visits is longer, the adjustment the child has to make becomes less frequent; this supports finding regarding length of mother's stay abroad.

#### Recommendations:

1- Considering that the academic performance of pupils with "at home" mothers is significantly higher than that of pupils with "abroad" mothers, it is recommended that mothers abroad must regularly communicate through letters or phone with their children back home. Words of encouragement, motivation and inspiration to study hard and even a promise of incentives for excellent grades attained will surely help the child in his studies. Mothers abroad should also check with the father or mother surrogates and with their children themselves on how they fare in their academic performance and other school activities. When "abroad" mothers come home for vacation, they must spend more quality time with the children. One can not turn the clock back, time spent with our children is never time lost. Mothers

should take time for wholesome family activities, such as having fun together in sports, indoor games, attending educational, cultural or religious shows or concerts, attend Sunday worship together, visit relatives and friends and most especially give more time assisting the children in their school assignments.

2. Since a study period of three and six hours seem to show a strong influence on academic performance, it is recommended that mothers at home, and fathers or mother surrogates encourage the children to put in at least three hours of study per week at home.

3. Considering that the fathers' assistance in school assignments has a substantial influence on the pupils' academic performance, it is recommended that fathers help, guide and assist their children in their school assignments and other school activities in the mothers' absence; they must also take part in this task even if mothers are at home.

4. In as much as the presence of problems such as financial problems, and problems in relationship with teachers, and problems regarding relationship with siblings influence the pupils' academic performance, it is recommended that parents must be supportive emotionally and financially in their children's school projects and other academic or extra-curricular activities. It is recommended that parents must make an effort to discover the problems which confront their children. A closer relationship must be developed among members of the family and open lines of communication in the home must be cultivated.

Parents must always have time for and interest in what their children have to say. They must constantly express their love for them, understand their limitations and show concern by helping them in the immediate solution of their problems.

Problems in relation with teachers have strong influence on the academic performance of pupils. It is therefore recommended that teachers be led to see that relationship with the children is of more importance than rules. The teacher must be firm in her classroom discipline but warm and responsive to the personal needs of her pupils. She has to develop rapport with her pupils and encourage them to participate actively in classroom activities. It is also recommended that teachers be sensitive to the needs and problems of her pupils. She should talk to each child personally during counseling time to know the pupils' problems in school.

5. The length of time of mothers' stay abroad and the interval of mothers' home visits have significant negative influence on the child's academic performance. It is recommended that "abroad" mothers maintain continuous regular communication with their husbands and children by phone or by mail. Mothers should never forget to greet their children and other members of the family on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas, valentine and other special holidays which are significant to the family. Although the mother is separated by distance, the assurance of a spiritually intact and happy family will give the child the feeling of security that will inspire him to achieve

better academic performance.

The following are recommended for further study:

1. The influence of absence from and presence of fathers at home on academic performance of pupils.
2. The influence of the absence from and presence of both fathers and mothers on the academic performance of pupils.